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ABU SIMBEL, FEBRUARY, 1967

By John Wilson

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From February 11th to 15th, 1967, the Group of Archaeologists and Landscaping Architects held its sixth session by visiting Abu Simbel. The Nubian campaign has been an elaborate network of committees, sub-committees, task forces, and delegations. For seven years I have been involved in one or another of these international groups. The consultative committee, which had general recommending responsibility for every phase of the Nubian campaign, held meetings in a Cairo hotel. It is much pleasanter to join the landscaping group, which travels on a slow boat to the site of Abu Simbel, to advise on the "historical value and beauty" of the reconstructed temples.

To restore Abu Simbel on higher ground, the Government of the U. A. R. has engaged a contractor, six engineering firms known as the Joint Venture. Watching on the sidelines stand the U. A. R.'s resident archaeologist and resident engineer, as well as representatives of the Swedish firm VBB, which devised the plan for the dissection and reconstruction of the monument. From time to time there appear two international teams, the Board of Consultants, engineers who are competent to judge materials, machines, stresses, and strains; and the Landscaping Group, which is concerned with the final appearance of the reconstructed site.

We meet in Cairo, fly to Assuan, board the "Dakkah", an old push-wheel houseboat, and travel to and from Abu Simbel. Travel each way takes a day and a night, so that meetings are held in the ship's saloon. The report must be finished just before we are back again at the First Cataract. We then have a formal ritual of signing the stenciled report with the point of a fork. It started that way at the first session, so that it has become traditional ceremonial.



The Group numbers seven, four Egyptologist and three landscapers. Of the Egyptologists, Prof. Kasimierz Michalowski, a Pole, serves as Chairman; Prof. Adolf Klasens, a Hollander, is the Rapporteur; Anwar Shukri, an Egyptian, is the Resident Archaeologist on the site; and I complete the number. The landscaping architects come from Denmark, France, and Italy. Sitting with us are two Swedes from the VBB firm; the representative of UNESCO, Louis A. Christophe; the representative of the Ministry of Culture, Shehata Adam; and the Vice-President of the government's Engineering Office, Mohammed Osman. The Group is extraordinarily congenial, for twelve people coming from eight different countries. This friendliness is a blessing, because we are cooped up on a boat for more than four days. Meals are relaxed in an atmosphere in which I may be twitted about my defective French or a young Swede about his beard. The last evening, after we had finished the report and before we landed at the High Dam, was given over to storytelling: traditional Arab tales, experiences in a prisoner-of-war camp, of the misadventures of a woman Egyptologist from Europe, who tried to visit an inaccessible Delta site by using only local conveyances.

What constitutes "landscaping"? I shall not go back over the five previous sessions, where the focus of attention was on the two temples themselves. They are now essentially rebuilt, so that the sixth session was devoted to giving them further "value and beauty." The fabric of the temples is in place, but the joints between blocks have not been filled, and there is some surface cleaning and repair to be done. We received a detailed report on the nature and amount of damage which blocks had suffered in their journey from their former setting to their present locations. We inspected those carved scenes which were said to have incurred the worst damage. The result is highly encouraging. The injuries in the worst places will be visible to anyone who knows where to look, but the percentage of serious damage is very low, and the repairs are admirable. On the whole, the entire job has been beautifully done, and the temples once more present a magnificent appearance.

At this session more time was spent on the setting of the temples, the two artificial hills which frame the shrine. Someone remarked that man makes buildings; but man does not make mountains. Can you build up a hill out of individual blocks and make it look so much like a natural cliff that the visitor will take it for granted and not look at it? That is what we are trying to do. The facades of the temples and their immediate framing of hillside use exactly the same stone in the same places. Then there is a blending of stone and treatment of stone away from the facades, until you reach ordinary rock-fill at the back of the hills. Just as you fill in every joint between blocks inside the temple, so you must fill in a majority of the seams in the hillside, so that it looks like a stratified and naturally scarred cliff.

Around Abu Simbel there were about two dozen stelas, and the original proposal had been that each one of them should occupy exactly the same relative position in the new site as in the old. But the chief approach to the new site will come around a shoulder to the south, so that the new hill

cannot be an exact duplicate of the old. Three of the stelas will have to occupy new positions, and we argued at length about a compromise of position or simple removal, with exhibit in a museum at the site. Compromise won.

How many trees and where should they stand? How far behind the site should the nearest modern building be permitted? Should a bank of sand be fixed between the two temples, or should we let nature take care of that? Where should the grave of Major Tidswell, who died here in 1884, be replaced? Over the temple is a concrete dome. What provision will there be inside these domes for lighting and ventilating machinery, and what will the access to the domes be? In general, we are trying for a 1900 aspect of the monuments, when the visitor was conscious of nothing but the ancient carvings.

Lighting was a major consideration. The Group heard proposals for some spectacular Son et Lumière effects for the benefit of tourists, and was unanimous in reacting against this. Abu Simbel was a sacred place, and we want to maintain an air of majesty and silent mystery. Time will show whether we can put our view point over. The entertainment of tourists is always a consideration, here as elsewhere.

Reports on the reconstruction of Abu Simbel have been of two kinds. The news media seem to say that it is all triumphantly over. Actually there is anywhere from eighteen months' to two years' more work to do. At the other extreme are the verbal rumors of major damage or disaster. Actually there has been no important shattering injury. The work is clean and strong. Abu Simbel will again be a place of power and wonder.

Only those who have experienced l'esprit de Nubie can really understand it. Most of the field expeditions into Nubia had it. They went in young and inexperienced, and they had to pool what knowledge and skill they had. For them l'esprit de Nubie was an exciting common adventure, a fellowship shared by the young. Yet these international commission, usually constructed of grey-beards in Egyptology, also have it. Seven years ago they were pitched into an emergency against a short deadline. Faced with a common goal, they could work together, and they did so. This landscaping group was another example of a hardworking committee, united in common purpose and admirably inspired by the leadship of Profs. Michalowski and Klasens.

HIGHLIGHTS OF A TRIP TO EGYPT

By Margaret Thompson

President of the Archaeological Institute of America

Late last autumn the writer, in the company of Frances F. Jones of the Princeton Art Museum, made an all-to-hasty but extremely rewarding tour of Egyptian sites from Alexandria to Abu Simbel. The Dormans, with whom we spent

five memorable days aboard the ARCE houseboat Al Fustat, suggested that readers of the Newsletter might be interested in a brief report on some of the places we visited.

Work on Abu Simbel is nearing completion. The large temple is accessible in its new location, although the presence of extensive scaffolding makes it difficult to see details of the decoration. The four Colossi are now re-erected in front of the temple and a substantial amount of rock has been put in place behind them, providing a background which successfully conveys the impression of the original setting. At present the temple stands high above Lake Nasser and is reached by a circuitous route leading from the water's edge some distance north and approaching the site from the rear, but the opening of the High Dam will bring the water level close to the temple entrance.

The trip to the site is easily arranged through the Cataract Hotel at Aswan which operates hydrofoil service four times a week. A full day is required: five hours up, an hour or so there, and five hours back. The hotel provides a picnic lunch, for there are no facilities at the site. After one recovers from the 4:30 a.m. departure, the trip is unforgettable for the beauty of the sunrise over the lake and for the distinctive quality of the Nubian landscape. One passes numerous deserted settlements in varying stages of inundation, bringing home as no words could a realization of the price which has been paid for this vitally important program of irrigation.

Another highlight of our stay was a visit to the Solar Boat, arranged as a special courtesy by Dr. Mohamed Mahdi, then Director General of Antiquities, whose death in a motor accident has recently been reported. The task of re-assembling the vessel is taking place in a large workshop near the Cheops pyramid, just around the corner from its place of discovery. A staff of skilled technicians has been engaged for years in treating and joining the 1200 pieces of wood which were lifted from a thirty meter long trench to the south of the great pyramid. To date, the hull has been completely restored, and it is truly an awe-inspiring experience to see the great bark, forty meters long and seven meters high at the stern, with its timbers so incredibly well preserved that the vessel looks as seaworthy as it was five thousand years ago. Another year of two of painstaking care will be required to restore the cabin and move the boat to the permanent museum being constructed over its find-spot. Once that has been done, the Solar Boat will undoubtedly be one of the major attractions of a land surpassingly rich in archaeological treasures.

EPOXY AND ABU SIMBEL

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There is a home-workshop adhesive on the market now that comes in two tubes. When equal parts of each are mixed together, they form a "glue" so strong that, when "cured", its manufacturers claim that a single drop will support the weight of a suspended automobile.

Called epoxy, the resin "glue" is a product of polymer chemistry and, along with other adhesives in the same chemical family, is revolutionizing the process of making things stick to each other. By literally chemically welding metals and other materials together, the new (since 1950) family of bonding agents has been responsible for hundreds of new products and improvements on dozens of old ones.

Where various types of glue made from animal products once did most cementing chores in household and industrial work, the new epoxies now make possible the construction of such intricately engineered assemblies as American supersonic airplanes. In one of its most dramatic displays, however, epoxy resins helped rescue the ancient Nubian temples at Abu Simbel from the rising waters of the Nile River in the United Arab Republic.

What are these new cements and adhesives with the strange sounding name? How did they help save the Abu Simbel temples?

The name has its origin in the Greek description of the chemical symbol for the epoxy group, this being oxygen over carbon which, loosely expressed in Greek, becomes ep-oxy. Perhaps the best known way to make an epoxy resin is from the intermediate chemicals derived from oil or coal. These, known as Epichlorohydrin and Bisphenol-A are "cooked" together in a long and complicated process at the end of which an epoxy resin results.

The early developers, P. Castan in Switzerland in 1938 and Dr. S. Greenlee in the United States, learned how to change the liquid resin into a solid, but until the post-war years, the phenomenon remained in the category of chemistry "magic".

The epoxy resin is a liquid (thermoplastic) and will, if left alone, remain liquid almost forever. However, when a so-called hardener is added, the liquid resin, in scarcely more than ten hours, will be transformed into an infusible solid that will maintain that state forever. The hardener has in fact, become an integral part of the epoxy which is a "thermosetting" resin--- as the mixture of epoxy resin and hardener gels, it gets hot as it cures. But, once hardened, it will not again melt when heated. When pressed between two objects, it literally welds them together.

And that's where the story of Abu Simbel comes in.

There was no question that the ancient temples of Abu Simbel had to be moved if they were to escape the rising waters of the Nile caused by the completion of the Aswan Dam and the creation of Lake Nasser. The one question was the method of protecting them. A French plan would have shielded

them with a coffer dam; a British scheme would have left them standing in filtered water so they could have been viewed from underwater galleries. The Italians proposed cutting the temples loose and jacking them up to higher levels in two huge masses.

The plan finally adopted --- for technical, aesthetic and financial reasons --- was to cut the 3,000-year-old temples of Ramses II and his queen, Nefertari, bodily out of the sandstone rock, but divided into sections, and then transport them to a site 63.3 meters above the future level of Lake Nasser for reassembling. The contract was awarded to an international consortium, with the management in the hands of a West German construction company.

In early 1964, a 360 meter protective coffer dam was erected to protect the monuments against the already rising waters. Many tons of sand were moved in to protect exposed parts of the statues. Finally, layers of covering topsoil and some 134,405 cubic meter of solid limestone were stripped away from around the temples, leaving walls and a roof only .6 to .7 meters thick. In 1965 when the ceiling of the sanctuary was removed, the statues within were seen in light from above for the first time.

But despite their size, the great statues were really too fragile for the job ahead. Nubian sandstone consists of quartz sand cemented in horizontal layers by a calcareous material, and its coherence or ability to hold together is extremely poor.

After exhaustive testing, the engineers decided to bore two holes, 3.7 to 4.3 centimeters in diameter, almost through each of the 3,000-kilogram blocks of stone. Into each hole they dropped two knurled steel construction rods, and then poured a resin-epoxy mixture called Araldit-Epoxyhard, for the critical job of anchoring the rods within the holes. The resin formula was developed by the American firm of General Mills and supplied to one of its customers, Ciba Aktiengesellschaft, Basel, Switzerland.

The epoxy was allowed to cure for 24 hours. Then, a special boom on a huge crane was attached to each of the numbered blocks. When the sections were lifted to safety, the steel rods embedded in the clear resin base were sawed off flush with the tops of the blocks.

Many people and countries were involved in saving the awesome works of art for posterity. Today, the reconstruction process in the new, safe location is going on, again using chemical adhesive to seal cracks in the sandstone, join the blocks together and recreate the temples.

Thus, modern chemistry, only a few decades old, has made possible the preserving of art 32 centuries old.

How long will the epoxy resin used in the statues of Ramses II

and his queen Nefertari last?

Much longer than the monuments themselves, say engineers. One observed that the statues are actually stronger today than when they were carved out of the virgin rock several thousand years ago.

PROFESSOR WALTER EMERY AND HIS IBISES

By John Dorman

Director, American Research Center in Egypt

Early in February Dr. Fairservis and I accepted an invitation from Dr. Walter B. Emery, the leading British archaeologist working in Egypt today, to visit his excavations at Saqqara. There, Dr. Emery feels that he is on the verge of something big.

He took us first to the scene of excavations he has conducted during the past few years, northwest of the site of Mariette's house and almost a mile due north of the present house of the Department of Antiquities. There we entered a vast catacomb where thousands of ibis mummies are buried, each one carefully wrapped in linen and stowed in a pottery jar with a sealed lid. A gallery about four kilometers long has been excavated, with sixty-seven branch galleries leading from it. Many of the latter still contain ibis mummies stacked solidly from ground to ceiling; others are clogged with sand, which pours into them from Third-Dynasty tombs located above them everytime someone tries to shovel it out; still others have been cleared, but Dr. Emery feels that there is nothing further to be gained by clearing the remainder of the galleries, for he already has more ibises than he knows what to do with. So this season he has moved his excavation about a quarter of a mile to the east, where there are remains of a mud brick structure, possibly a temple.

Here he has been working for approximately a month and a half and has another month and a half to go before the end of the season. He has 350 workmen and about 25 Guftis, these last the hereditary diggers who are sought after by every archaeologist to act as foreman on an excavation. In clearing the rubble from the inside of the mud-brick enclosure, Dr. Emery has made some significant finds. In one corner of the enclosure, he has discovered a mass of rush matting, which he believes once formed some kind of pavilion. His workmen have also unearthed a small sculpture, beautifully carved and about eighteen inches high, with an inscription identifying the person represented as a scribe of one of the Ptolemaic kings. Two headless statues of Anubis and the head of a third Anubis, a number of small gilded wooden uraei and fragments of late papyri in bad condition are among the other objects that have turned up within the mud-brick walls, and Dr. Emery believes that all these things were deliberately destroyed and dumped into the enclosure after the advent of Christianity, by zealots desirous of

ridding Egypt of all vestiges of paganism.

In an angle of the enclosure, he has just uncovered steps leading downward to an impressive entrance of masonry, the opening to which has been sealed by large rocks laid parallel to the ground on which it stands. A great deal of earth and debris must be removed before he can discover what lies beyond the sealed doorway.

It may be recalled that Dr. Emery has in the past years been searching for the tomb of Imhotep, the architect of King Zoser, who built the Step Pyramid and its wonderful enclosure, the first monumental stone architecture of Egypt. Since there are many tombs of the Third Dynasty in the area in which Dr. Emery is excavating, he believes that the tomb of Imhotep might logically be found among them and that the ibises and other late finds may be evidence of a new importance given to the tomb at the period in which Imhotep, who had long been revered as physician and sage as well as architect, was defied and identified with the Greek god of healing Aesculapius.

An early French explorer describes having been let down at the end of a rope into a long gallery in which he saw gilded images of cows. Dr. Emery believes that the gateway which he is about to clear might well be the entrance to a gallery comparable in size to the serapaeum, which may be the burial place of the mothers of the sacred bulls, to which references have been found in inscriptions. The gilded uraei, he thinks, may well have come from this gallery. Since the bull and the cows, as well as the ibis, are connected with the worship of Imhotep, he feels that he must be in the vicinity of the tomb for which he is seeking.

Standing above his excavations, Dr. Emery points to the area immediately north, where the fertile valley seems to encroach on the desert sands with green grass and clustered palms. He can remember when this area was a lake, before it was drained by the canal that has given it to cultivation. Since an early historian avers that Imhotep was buried near the Lake of Crocodiles, Dr. Emery believes that he is on the right track.

Of course he can not predict when he will find the tomb. Excavation is costly. Funds, he explains, were limited last season, although this year the Egypt Exploration Society has been extremely generous and he has been assured that support will be forthcoming also for the coming season. In the meantime, Dr. Emery is adding bit by bit to the sum of knowledge of ancient history and is still hopeful of locating the burial place of the first great architect of all time whose name has come down to the present.

EXCAVATION OF A STRATIFIED PHARAONIC SITE IN THE EGYPTIAN DELTA AT MENDES
1966 SEASON

By Donald Hanson

Associate Professor, Institute of
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Field Director of Excavation at
Mendes

The third season of excavation at Mendes of The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, under the auspices of The American Research Center in Egypt, took place during the summer of 1966. Work began on May 30th and was finished on August 15th. The staff was composed of fifteen professionals and students, the latter from the Institute of Fine Arts, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago. Excavation was undertaken at both Tell el Rob'a (Mendes) and Tell Timai el Amdid (Thmuis).

At Tell el Rob'a work was entirely concentrated within the sacred precinct of the sanctuary of the Ram God of Mendes. Some areas which had been excavated in previous seasons were further investigated and some new portions of the temple were begun this season. In what was once the fore-court area of the temple, but below the temple foundations, one aquare (X 260-270, Y 130-140) was carried down further in depth than last year's excavations. Most destroyed graves of the end of the Old Kingdom and of the First Intermediate Period were encountered. Ten of these were tombs constructed of limestone, and they were entirely undecorated. Only a few bones were preserved in the structures. In one a necklace composed of a few frit beads strung on a gold wire was found. Near another broken tomb, a copper mirror which must have been part of the funerary gifts was discovered in the debris. Another Old Kingdom tomb was formed of a mud brick sarcophagus with a barrelvaulted roof. The body was wrapped in a great quantity of reed matting. A few pots found associated with the burial indicated that it belonged to the end of the Old Kingdom. Strata below this level were also investigated, and a few burials were found. The bodies had been simply wrapped in reed matting and placed in the ground without any funerary gifts; hence, it is impossible to date them with any degree of accuracy.

On the west side of what was once the temple, excavations were expanded to the south of the large tombs of Setnet-Pepy and Ima-Pepy, discovered during the first and second seasons. This new area is located at Y-90-120, X-260-220. Here the remains of other broken and badly preserved burials were found. One broken limestone tomb in which nothing remained bore traces of painting, probably similar to that which decorated the tomb of Setnet-Pepy. The names and titles of the owner were not preserved. When the tomb was dismantled, we found that it was built of blocks reused from an earlier tomb. Some of these reused blocks had offering formulae in sunken hieroglyphs. As yet we do not know where this earlier tomb once stood. The level of the tombs in this area had been covered by large mud brick platforms which belong to the

period of the Late Period temple. Underneath one of these platforms was found the remains of a ram's or bull's head and some sixteen miniature pots. This was clearly a disturbed foundation deposit, probably belonging to a post-Amasis extension of the sanctuary of the Ram God. Of considerable interest was the find in the tomb debris of a blue paste composition cylinder seal of an official of King Unas of the 5th Dynasty. This again points to the importance of Mendes for defining the archaeology of the early periods of the Delta. In this same area part of the foundation system of the Late Period was also discovered and the major sand retaining wall was traced to the south.

Probably the most important discovery yet made at Mendes was encountered in the area of the great monolithic naos inscribed by Amasis. While cleaning debris on the top of the east foundation wall of the temple, several inscribed granite blocks appeared. The site of the hieroglyphs, the nature of their carving, plus architectural features of the blocks indicated that they must have come originally from another giant monolithic naos, hitherto unknown.

This naturally caused us to investigate the entire area around the naos where several people had excavated in earlier times. Before we began the excavations only three courses of limestone foundation could be observed below the granite base of the naos. Upon clearing the entire area it was found that there were actually six courses of limestone foundation blocks for the foundation of the naos. This huge limestone foundation covered the entire area bounded by the mud brick foundation walls. Resting upon the lower foundation courses as well as in the sand below the limestone foundations where the blocks had been removed during centuries of quarrying in this area, we found many other fragments of the granite naos. Indeed it soon became evident that there were more than just two naoi, and we can now prove beyond doubt that there were four of these gigantic monolithic naoi within an open court. The naos which is still standing bears the name of the god Shu. The other three naoi are now known to have been dedicated to Geb, Osiris, and Ra.

When the excavations are completed, we shall be able to present a detailed picture of the procedure employed in construction of the shrine. In short, the builders first dug out the entire area where the shrine was to be placed, removing all traces of the early cemetery which must have extended this far south. The ancients then filled in this excavated area with hard-packed earth and rammed mud. Upon this a thick layer of pure sand was placed on which the first course of the limestone foundation was laid. With each successive limestone foundation course, the mud brick enclosure wall was carried up a comparable distance. On every other course of foundation the eventual placement of the naoi was inscribed on the limestone. Hence, we now have definite proof of where the naoi were situated. After six courses of limestone foundation were laid, four large granite blocks were set in place upon which the naoi stood.

While studying the inscriptions on the standing naos it was noted that there is a strange mixture of incised hieroglyphs, sunken hieroglyphs, and those in relief. This naturally posed a question as to whether or not these shrines had originally been built by a predecessor of Amasis and then usurped during his reign. This question can now be answered definitively for we have

located the four foundation deposits beneath the lowest course of limestone in the four corners of the shrine. All four deposits were by Amasis, conclusively proving that the entire sanctuary was built during his reign. The foundation deposits were composed of an animal head and leg, an enormous quantity of miniature pottery vessels, and a series of tiny plaques usually of four gold, four silver, four copper, four faience, four carnelian, four lapis, four red-stone and four green-stone. The latter have yet to be identified. There were also a miniature saddle quern and a half moon shaped faience plaque. Many of the small plaques bore the cartouche of Amasis.

To the north of this main sanctuary court were found extensions of the mud brick foundation. Another foundation deposit composed of an animal's head and a large hoard of miniature vessels were found in the brick. Although there were no inscribed plaques, it is clear that the pottery is entirely different from that of the Amasis deposits, hence the deposit must date to another reign, suggesting that the north extension of the sanctuary was an addition of a later kind. It is hoped that a careful study of this pottery will indicate exactly in what dynasty this addition was made. These new discoveries will necessitate the excavation of the entire temple area, a project for which several more years will be needed.

To the east and below the temple platform at X 160-190, Y 170-190, the mud brick buildings were discovered during the last season. It was hoped that in this area we would be able to make a stratigraphic counting in depth. The various floors associated with these buildings were investigated and the pottery recovered may tentatively be dated to the First Intermediate Period. In this area six building phases have been investigated. Considering the temple platform as Level I, we have excavated levels IIA, IIB, IIIB, and IIIC. All of these building phases were not found throughout the entire area. In one section below level IIB, a series of ashy strata were encountered. These ceased on top of a large mud brick structure which turned out to be a mastaba over ten meters square, probably of the end of the Old Kingdom. Except for a few courses of the top brick, the superstructure was entirely intact. On the south part of the facade are three rebated niches, the largest of which held the false door in situ. This gave the name of the owner of the tomb, one Ba Sen Pu, an overseer of the priests of the Ram God. On the northern part of the facade, there are nine small simple niches, this suggests that the mud brick niching so characteristic of earlier periods, lasted into later times at Mendes. We removed the top coursing of the mastaba and located the shaft in the central part behind the false door. The shaft was excavated to the bottom and it was found that it simply stopped at the bottom of the mastaba. Two very poor burials were found on either side of the shaft in the lowest courses of the brick. It is indeed strange that we were unable to find the burial chamber, if one indeed ever existed. The south end of another mastaba to the north partially appeared in the excavation. This will have to be investigated during the coming season.

Without question this third season of excavations at Mendes has been the most profitable and the most important. We now have a unique type of late period temple architecture with four gigantic, monolithic naoi in an open court. Furthermore, with the Old Kingdom mastaba we have extremely important architectural remains for the Old Kingdom in the Delta. We can only hope that we shall be able to add further important material to the archaeo-

logy of the Delta in our future campaigns.

South Kom

During the 1966 season two more soundings were made on the South Kom in order to acquire a better understanding of the problems that would confront us in this part of our concession and to determine where we might most profitably begin excavation.

Our first sounding, Sounding III, just north of the road leading from Kafr el Amir to Timai al Amdid, produced a large quartzite offering table near the surface and cleared the badly worn limestone sphinx, most of which had been visible for several years. The site, however, was in a natural depression which collects great quantities of water during the rainy season. Consequently, the mud brick was so badly water logged that it was impossible to make sense of the mud brick architectural remains. A few days of work convinced us that we would learn little here.

After due consideration we decided to begin excavation at Sounding IV, a narrow high-rise in the western part of the Kom. This area, like the whole mound, has been thoroughly worked by the Sabakheen. Here they left behind them, a layer of pottery sherds, sifted from the sabakh, up to 1.82 m. in depth. Removal of this layer required several days.

Excavation of the cleared area revealed eight rooms and small sections of several others destroyed in part by the deep pits of Sabakheen. In most cases the first floor levels of these rooms were found a short distance beneath the layer of pottery sherds. A second floor level was discovered in three rooms, especially in their upper portions, were badly chewed and hacked either by the deprivation of nature or by the Sabakheen.

The termination of level one was marked in all cases--- where this level has been reached--- by a platform of brick from one to three courses thick, built within the confines of the room. Narrow partition walls of the rooms above ended at the same level as the lowest course of the platform. Broader outside walls were often founded deeper on one-brick-thick footings projecting 10 to 18 cm. In the case of one room (Room #4) the entire foundation, which extended for a considerable distance beneath the floor, was stepped-out at the floor level. Beneath these platforms, in all cases we found a nearly sterile layer of sand and in a few cases new foundation walls dating from an earlier period. As the absolute sea level of this bricked-over sand construction varies markedly from higher in the West and lower in the East, one might hypothesize an original topographical incline running the same direction at the same time of the foundation of level I.

Finds from the surface included a wide variety of pottery sherds and glass fragments dating from the Hellenistic period to Islamic times. Several fragments of terracotta figurines were discovered as well as one fragment of a plaster terracotta mould and a number of bronze coins usually so badly corroded that full treatment in our laboratory failed to reveal a clue to their period. Of special interest was a small bronze statuette in good condition of Harpocrates seated on a lotus bud.

Characteristic finds of level I included a number of pottery fragments in good enough state of preservation to be reconstructed on paper, several whole pots, fragments of terracotta figurines, and a number of coins dating from Ptolemaic through Roman Imperial times. Amongst the terracottas several are worthy of mention: a small terracotta box, a small, nearly complete statuette of a seated Harpocrates, ca 15 cm. high, wearing the double crown between lotus buds and holding a jar in his left hand, and an over 75 cm. tall statuette of Bes dressed in Roman armour with some of the original color preserved.

Level II yielded a few pottery fragments, a few coins, and three tiny, badly worn faience amulet fragments.

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTER TO CAIRO

By John Dorman

Dr. von Grunebaum visited Cairo from February 10 to February 24. During these two weeks he saw many old friends, made some new ones, lectured five times, made many appropriate calls, forwarded his project on the translation of Modern Arabic literary pieces, was wine and dined.....and even found time taken from his busy schedule to spend two days in bed, recovering from a severe case of food poisoning.

Among those on whom Dr. von Grunebaum called were: Dr. Sarwat Okasha, Minister of Culture; Dr. Gamal Mokhtar, Director General of Antiquities; Ambassador Battle; Dr. Mahmoud Ezzet Salama, Minister of Higher Education; Dr. Kamal Hussein, President of the Institut d'Egypte; Dr. Madkour, President of the Arab Academy; and Dr. Thomas Bartlett, President of the American University.

Dr. von Grunebaum (1) lectured at Cairo University on February 14; (2) conducted a seminar of about twenty American residents, in Cairo all interested in Islam and the Arab world, on February 15; (3) lectured in French at the Dar-es-Salaam Lecture Hall on Byzantium and Islam; Parallels and Differences, on February 21; (4) lectured in Oriental Hall of the American University on Reflection on Social and Political Functions of Adab on February 22; and (5) addressed the Egyptian Society of Historic Research on February 23. All lectures were well attended. It was just as well that the lecture at the American University had been scheduled for a holiday (February 22 was both Washington's Birthday and Unity Day so that all schools and government buildings were closed), since even then Oriental Hall was filled to capacity and with some standing in the back.

Mr. and Mrs. Dorman held a reception aboard the Fustat to give Dr. von Grunebaum an opportunity to meet the Fellows, their wives, and the office staff of the Center. Mr. Dorman also gave a stag luncheon on the boat in Dr. von Grunebaum's honor, which was attended by the American Ambassador and six of Dr. von Grunebaum's Egyptian friends.

From the point of view of ARCE, Dr. von Grunebaum's visit was very successful and it is to be hoped that he, too, found it rewarding.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Mahdi

News has been received from John Dorman, Director of the Center in Cairo, of the tragic death of Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Mahdi, Director of Antiquities in the Ministry of Culture, who was struck by a passing car as he was entering his car on December 19 and died three days later without gaining consciousness. Dr. Mahdi had many friends both among his Egyptian colleagues and those foreigners who had the privilege of knowing and working with him, and he will be greatly mourned throughout the scholarly world.

Professor Jotham Johnson

Members of the Center will be greatly shocked by news of the premature and sudden death of Professor Jotham Johnson, Chairman of the Classical Department at New York University, on February 6, 1967, at the age of sixty-one. Dr. Johnson, a past president of the Archaeological Institute of America, had been a member of the Center for many years and had always taken a warm interest in its activities. His genial and helpful presence will be missed by his many friends and associates here and abroad.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS

Professor Walter A. Fairservis Jr., Director, Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum, of the University of Washington, has obtained a concession to excavate at Hierakonopolis, the ancient Nekhen, under the auspices of the ARCE, and has completed a preliminary exploration of the site. Members may expect a preliminary report from Professor Fairservis at the end of the season.

Mr. David O'Connor of the University of Pennsylvania is at present in Egypt arranging for a Yale-Pennsylvania reconnaissance excavation at Abydos. He is accompanied by Mr. Barry Kemp of Cambridge University and will be joined later by Professor W. Kelly Simpson, a member of the Executive Committee of the Center, who is Professor of Egyptology and Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at Yale University.

The following appointments have been reported from Cairo:

Dr. Gamal ed Din Mokhtar, now Director of Antiquities, to succeed the regretted Dr. Mahdi, who died on December 22 (see preceding page). Dr. Mokhtar is an Egyptologist, formerly Director of the Centre du Documentation in Cairo, and well-known in archaeological circles.

Dr. Henry Riad, formerly Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, now Director of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, to succeed Dr. Abdel Rahman. Dr. Riad's replacement at Alexandria has not yet been announced.

Zaki Iskander, now Director, Technical Department of the Service of Antiquities, Dr. Iskander has long been in charge of technical work at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Shafik Farid, former Chief of Inspectorates of the Service of Antiquities, now Director of the Coptic Museum.

Hassan Bakry, now Chief of Inspectorates of the Service of Antiquities, replacing Dr. Farid.

Mohammed Abdel Qader Mohammed, now Professor of Egyptology, University of Cairo. Dr. Mohammed Abdel Qader Mohammed, who accompanied the Tutankhamen exhibition to a number of American cities, left many friends in the United States.

A number of these news items have been reported by Mr. E.L.B. Terrace of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who is at present a Fellow of the Center, engaged in preparation of his doctoral thesis. Mr. Terrace has been working intensively at Middle Kingdom sites in Middle Egypt in connection with his doctoral thesis. Since a number of these sites are off the beaten tract and little visited by tourists, readers of the Newsletter will look forward to an account of his experiences.

Mrs. Terrance, who has accompanied her husband to Egypt, has been working as a volunteer in programming for the computer blocks from the Aten temple at Karnak, which are being assembled by a group headed by Mr. Ray W. Smith.